MARVEL
008
SUPERIOR
IRON MAN®
TAYLOR
WATANABE
JOSE
LEISTEN
WONG
GURU-eFX

BE BEAUTIFUL • BE INTELLIGENT • BE HEALTHY • BE IMMORTAL

BE SUPERIOR

Tony Stark is a technological visionary...a famous, wealthy and unparalleled inventor. With the world's most advanced and powerful suit of armor, Stark has valiantly protected the innocent as the golden Avenger known as IRON MAN.

A recent battle with a mentally powered villain has altered Stark's mind. With a more arrogant and aggressive personality surfacing, Stark used San Francisco to beta test his newest invention: the EXTREMIS 3.0 App. It can improve people's lives, making them more attractive, smarter, and healthier...for a **cost**.

As Tony's behavior became increasingly erratic and immoral, Pepper Potts activated a fail-safe that Tony himself made eight years prior; a full backup copy of Tony's mind. Operating from within empty armor, the copy was intended to fix Tony—or replace him. In Resilient's space station, the copy entered Tony's mind to determine if he was a lost cause, only to discover that Tony's plan to improve the Earth included engineering the 'sacrifice' of a percentage of the population. Before the copy could act, however, Tony shorted out its armor and prepared to continue on the warpath toward Pepper Potts...

CHAPTER 8: STARK CONTRAST

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RESILIENT HQ, NEW YORK.
TONY?
TONY!
DAMN IT!
WHAT HAPPENED?
WE LOST COMMUNICATION WITH THE RESILIENT SPACE STATION.

WHY ARE THERE TWO TONYS?
THE MAN YOU KNOW IS NOT TONY STARK. SOMETHING HAS CHANGED IN HIM.

HE SAID HE WAS GOING TO HELP ME.
HE... MAYBE HE WAS.

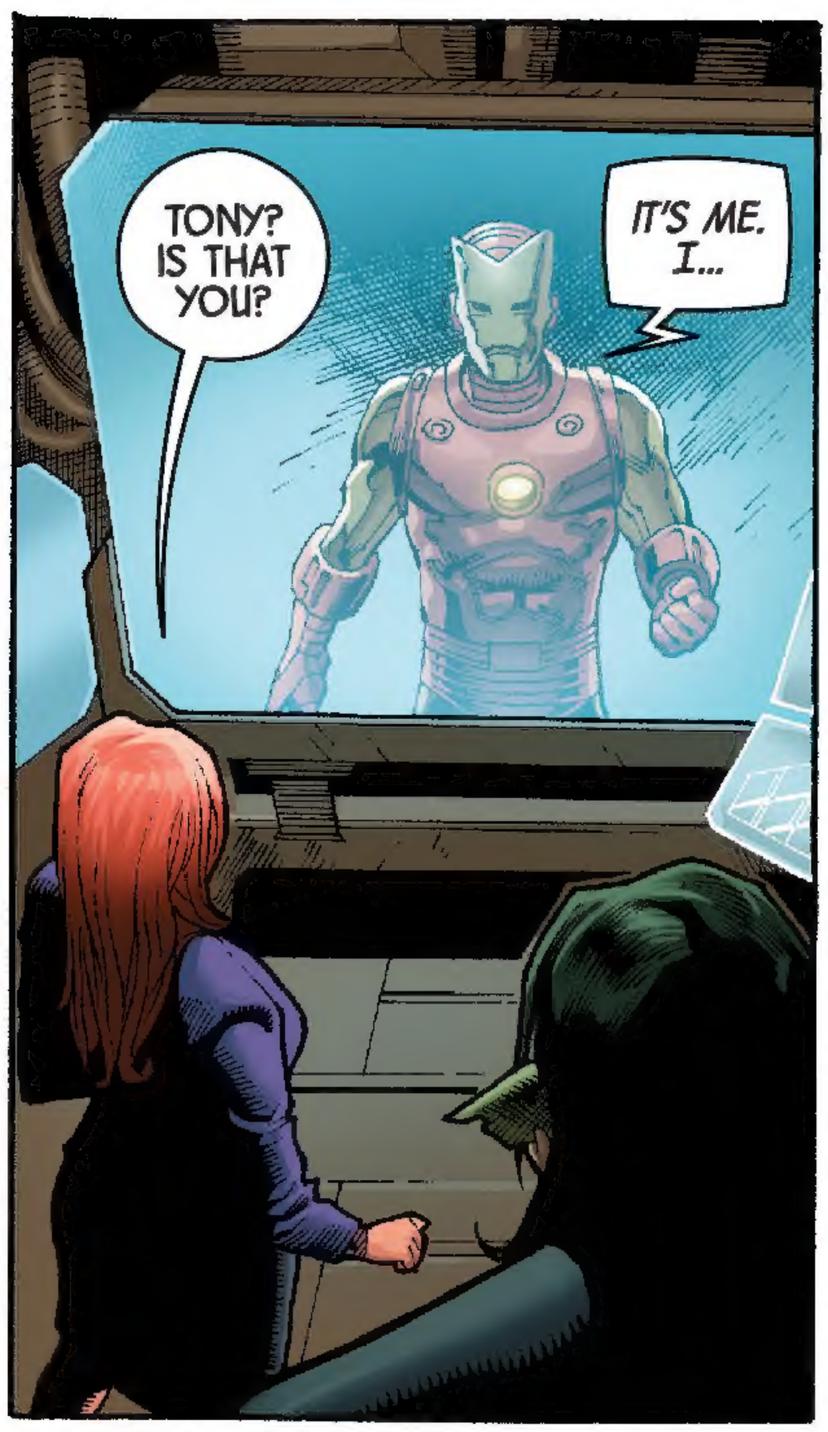
I DON'T WANT YOU TO HURT HIM.
I DON'T WANT TO HURT HIM EITHER. BELIEVE ME. I WANT TO UNDO WHAT'S BEEN DONE TO HIM. I JUST WANT HIM BACK.

I NEED TO KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING UP THERE.
HE CALLED YOU MY STEP-MOM.
TK TK TK
TK TK TK
YES. IN A WAY, I GUESS I AM. AND I PROMISE WE'LL TALK AS SOON AS--

SO ARE YOU THE REASON MY DAD DIDN'T WANT ME?

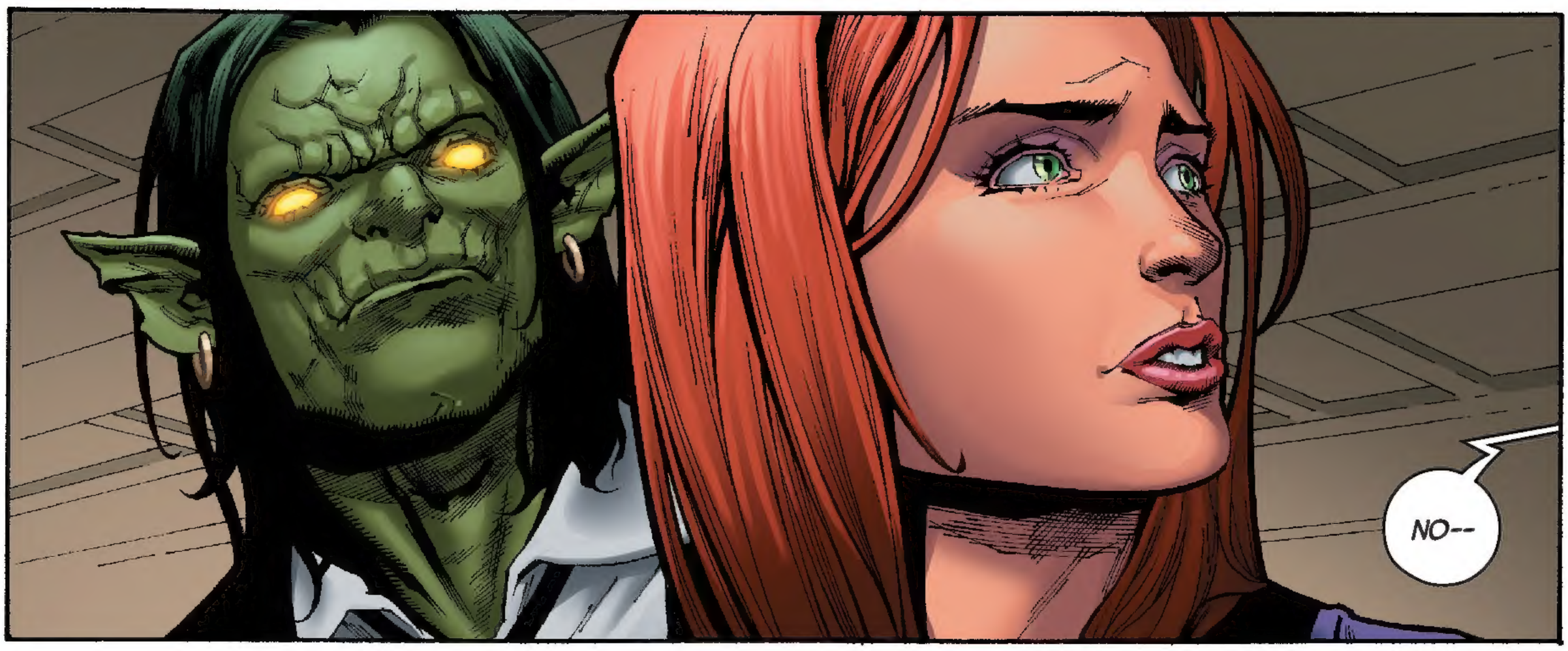
JAMIE, YOUR DAD...
IF YOU KNEW HIM. IF YOU KNEW HOW INFURIATINGLY LOYAL HE WAS, YOU'D KNEW THAT THERE IS NO WAY THAT HAPPY DIDN'T--

SSSSHHH
PEPPER!


TONY? IS THAT YOU?
IT'S ME. I...

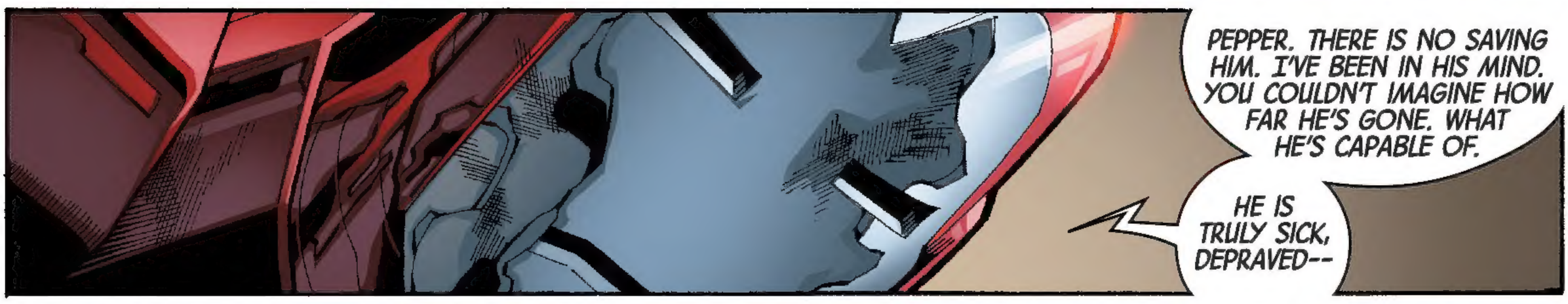
IT'S ME. THE REAL ME.

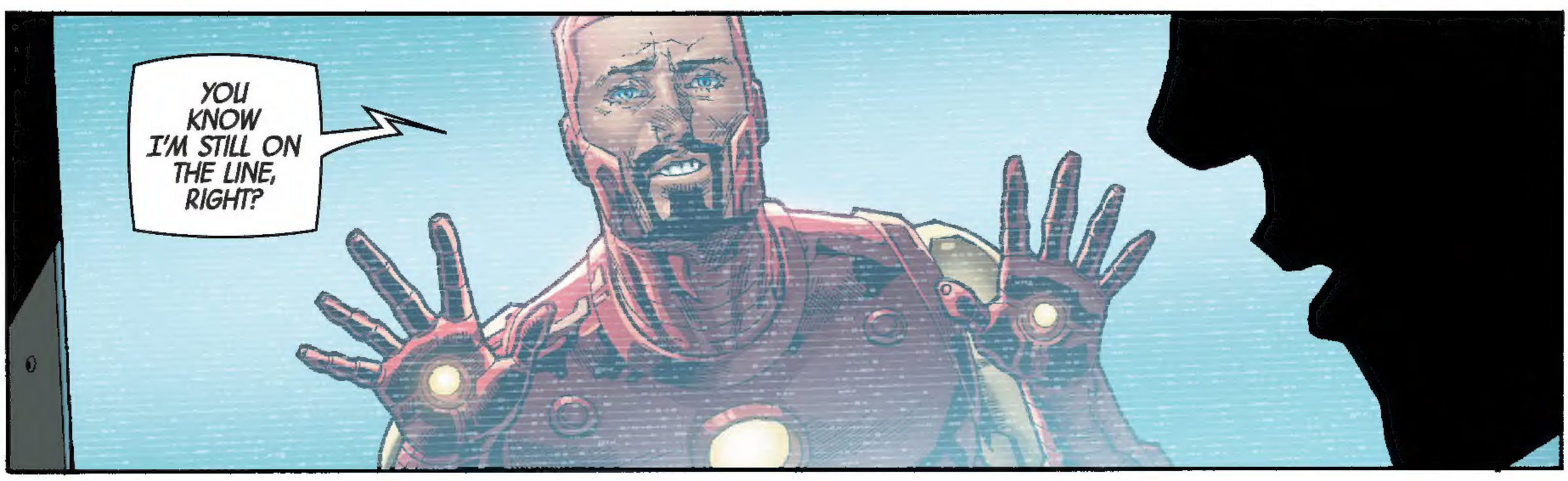
IT'S OVER, PEPPER.

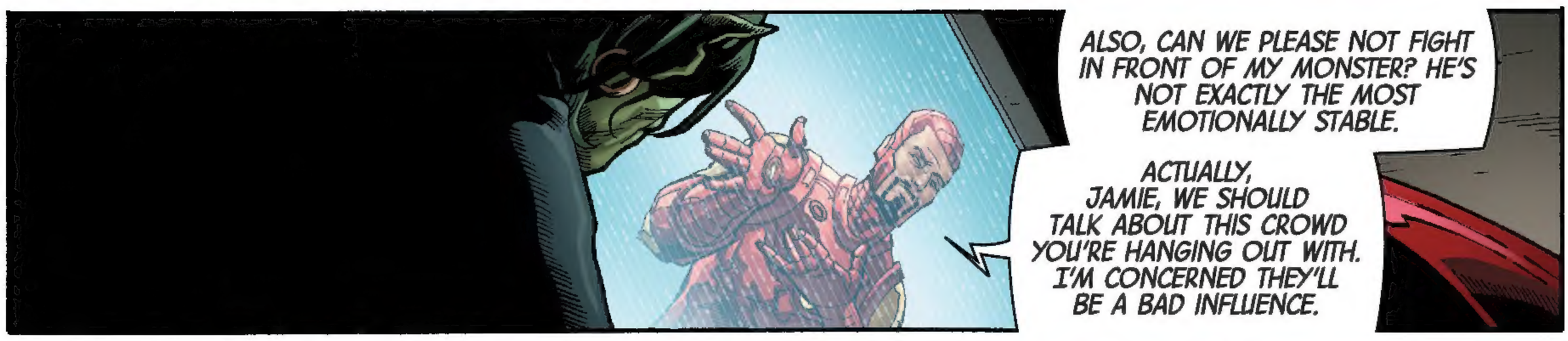

NO--

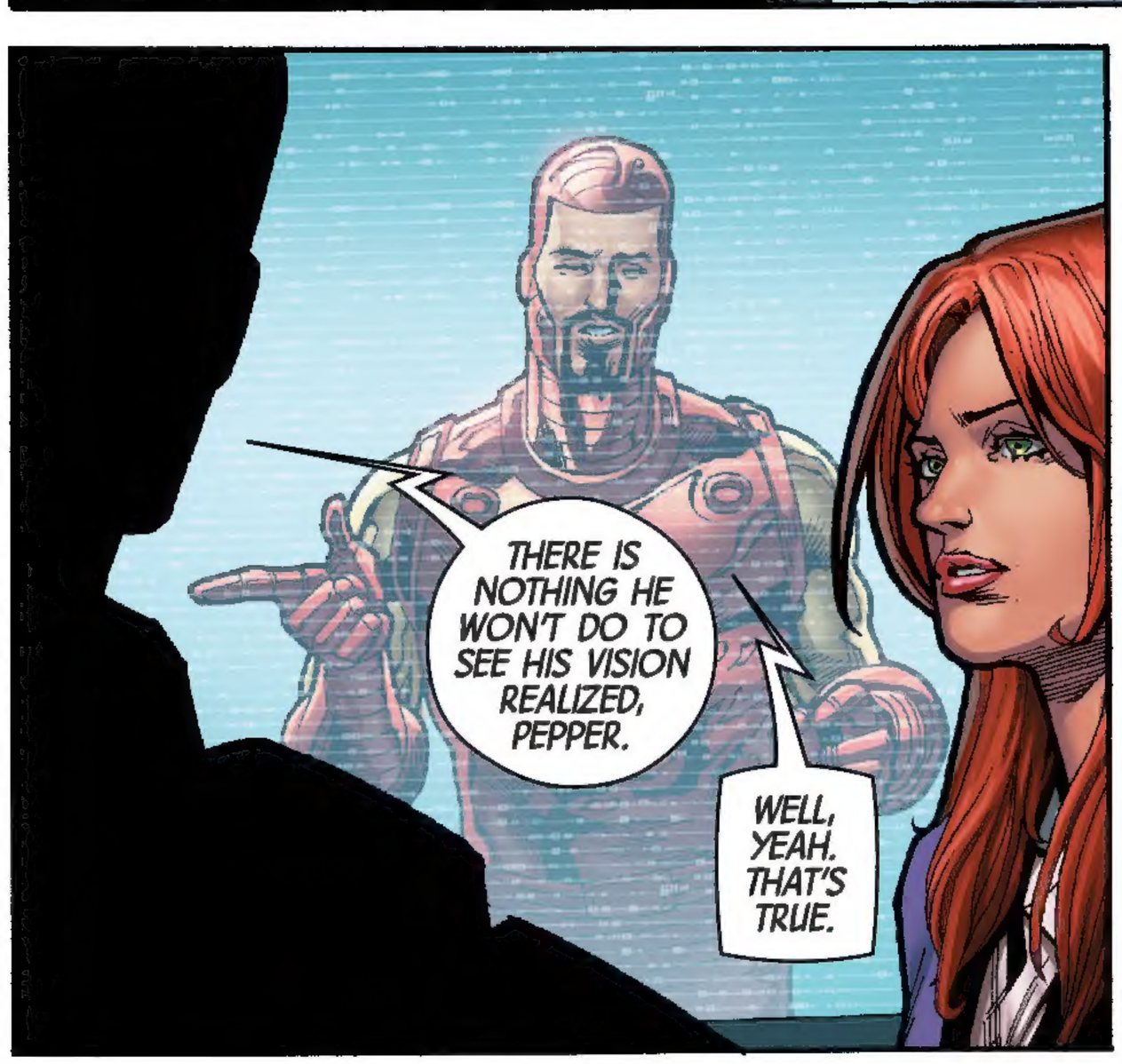
--IT'S NOT OVER.
HUH?
HOW MANY TONYS ARE THERE?
WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON?
WHAT'S GOING ON IS THERE'S ONLY ONE TONY. THAT ONE IS A DIGITALLY BACKED-UP IMPOSTER TONY.
APPARENTLY WEARING ONE OF MY FAVORITE SUITS.
SO, NO MATTER HOW EFFECTIVELY I TAKE HIM DOWN, HIS ENTIRE PROGRAM IS STORED SOMEWHERE, MEANING HE CAN JUST POP UP AGAIN.
WHAT HAPPENED?
WELL, THE SHOULDER PADS WERE A BOLD CHOICE BUT I WAS FEELING IT AT THE TIME.
A PIECE OF HIS ARMOR GOT IN. HE TOOK OUT THE MARK II'S MEMORY FROM THE INSIDE.
TELL HER THE WHOLE STORY, ARTIFICIAL TONY. YOU WERE IN MY HEAD. I WAS IN YOURS.
YOU WERE GOING TO WIPE MY MIND.
YOU WERE GOING TO REPLACE ME.

THE PLAN WAS TO TRY TO UNDO WHATEVER'S BEEN DONE!
THE PLAN CHANGED.
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO SAVE HIM!

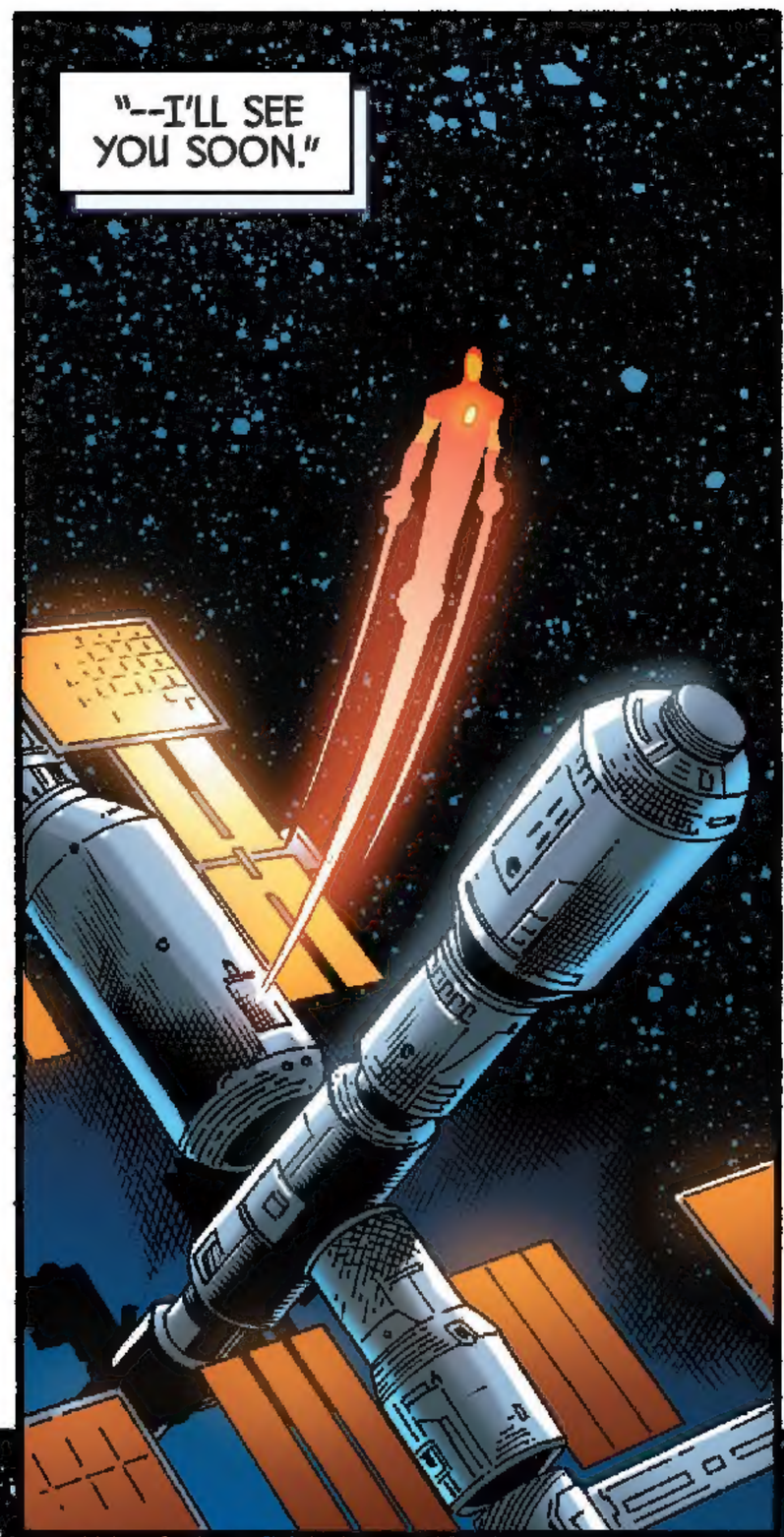

PEPPER. THERE IS NO SAVING HIM. I'VE BEEN IN HIS MIND. YOU COULDN'T IMAGINE HOW FAR HE'S GONE. WHAT HE'S CAPABLE OF.
HE IS TRULY SICK, DEPRAVED--


YOU KNOW I'M STILL ON THE LINE, RIGHT?


ALSO, CAN WE PLEASE NOT FIGHT IN FRONT OF MY MONSTER? HE'S NOT EXACTLY THE MOST EMOTIONALLY STABLE.
ACTUALLY, JAMIE, WE SHOULD TALK ABOUT THIS CROWD YOU'RE HANGING OUT WITH. I'M CONCERNED THEY'LL BE A BAD INFLUENCE.


THERE IS NOTHING HE WON'T DO TO SEE HIS VISION REALIZED, PEPPER.
WELL, YEAH. THAT'S TRUE.

AND YOU'RE IN MY WAY.
SO I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO REMOVE YOU.
I HOPE YOU'RE READY--



LOOK AT YOU. SO SMALL. SO FRAGILE.

DON'T WORRY, EARTH.

DEET

WE NEED TO GET READY.

HE'LL BE COMING.

YEAH... I DON'T THINK HE'S COMING.

WHAT IS IT?

IT'S THE EXTREMIS APP... HE JUST SENT A MESSAGE OVER IT.

San Francisco,

I've had a bad day and I require people to wear very little clothing and drink all of my booze with me.

Meet at Stark Island.

Love, Tony.

DID HE...?

YES. HE JUST SENT A BOOTY CALL OUT TO AN ENTIRE CITY.

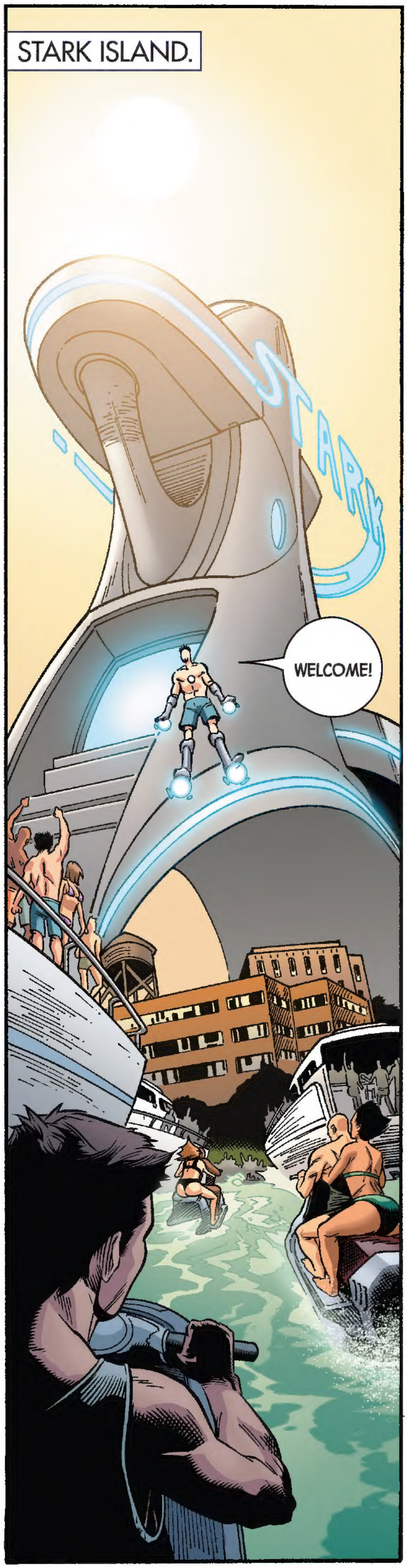
HE ALSO JUST SURROUNDED HIMSELF WITH INNOCENT BYSTANDERS.

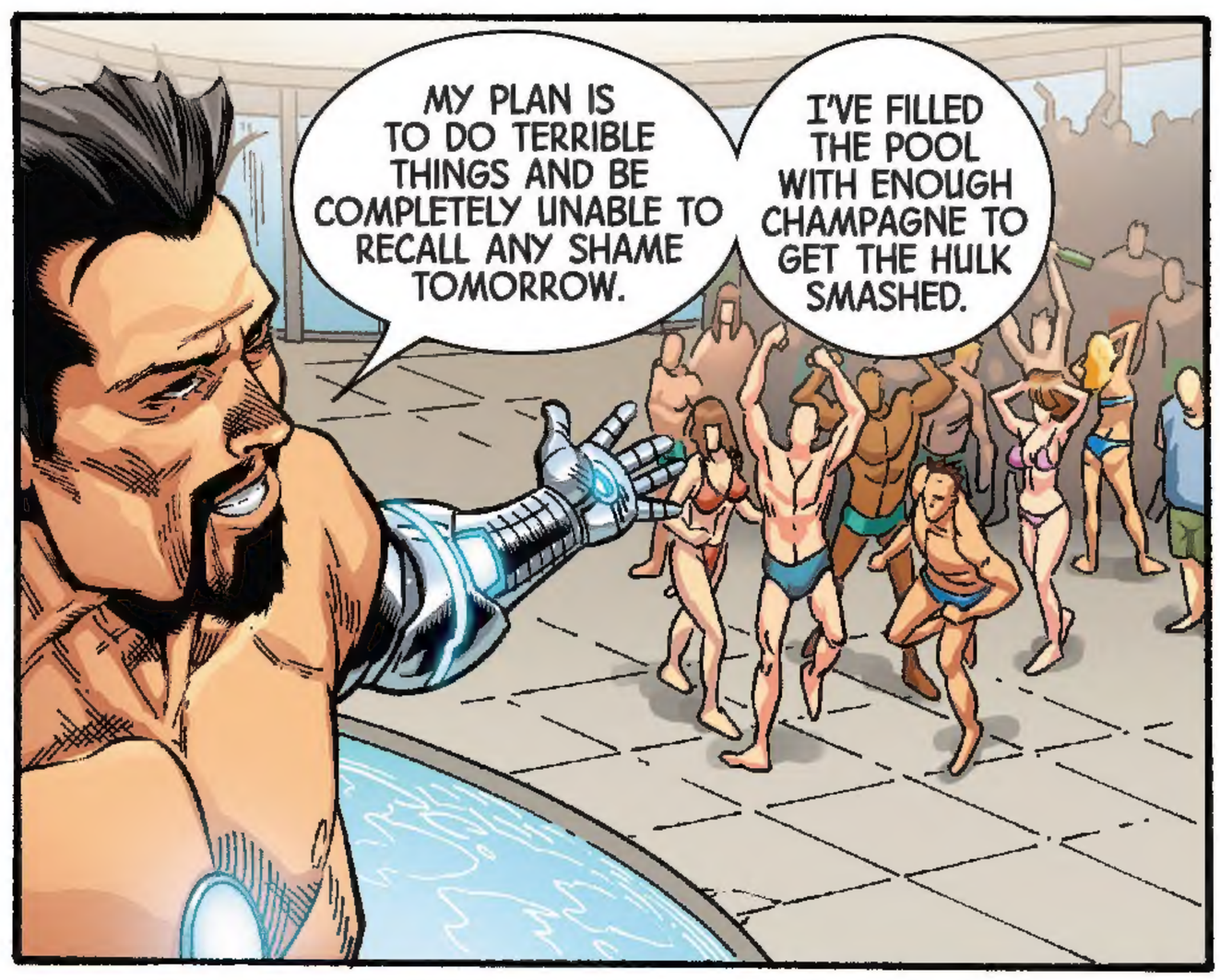
WHAT DO WE DO?

NOTHING. FOR NOW.

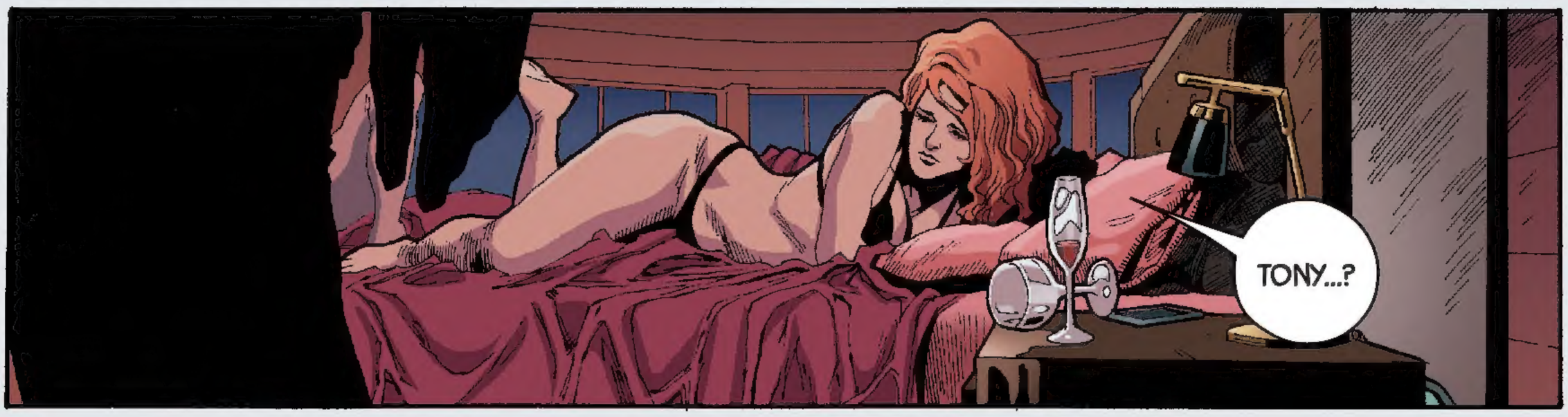
DO YOU REALLY THINK IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO GIVE HIM TIME TO PREPARE?

IT GIVES ME TIME TO PREPARE, TOO.

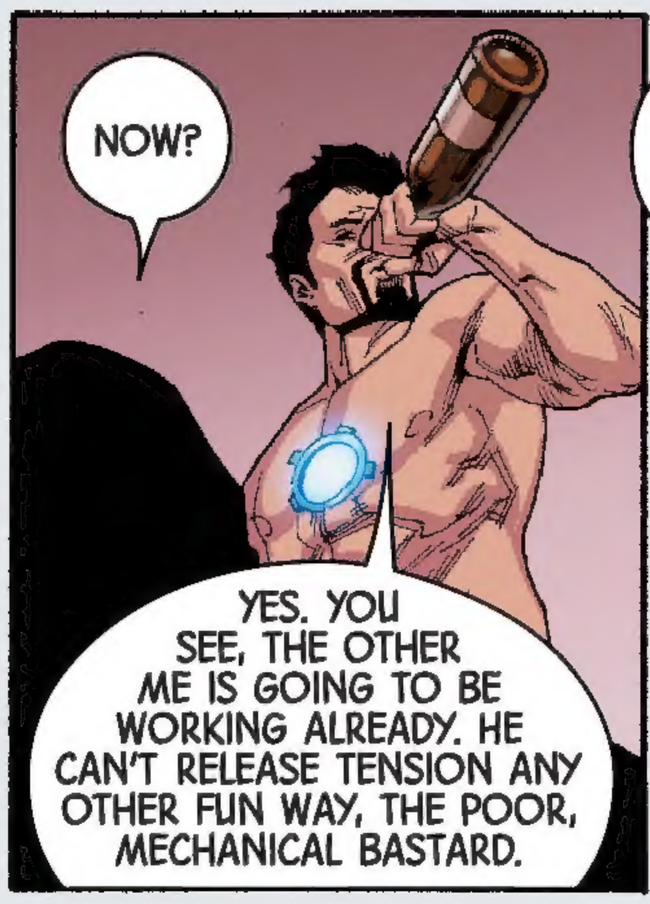

STARK ISLAND.
STARK
WELCOME!


MY PLAN IS TO DO TERRIBLE THINGS AND BE COMPLETELY UNABLE TO RECALL ANY SHAME TOMORROW.
I'VE FILLED THE POOL WITH ENOUGH CHAMPAGNE TO GET THE HULK SMASHED.

LET'S GET UNHYGIENICALLY OFF OUR FACES!
WHOOOOO!

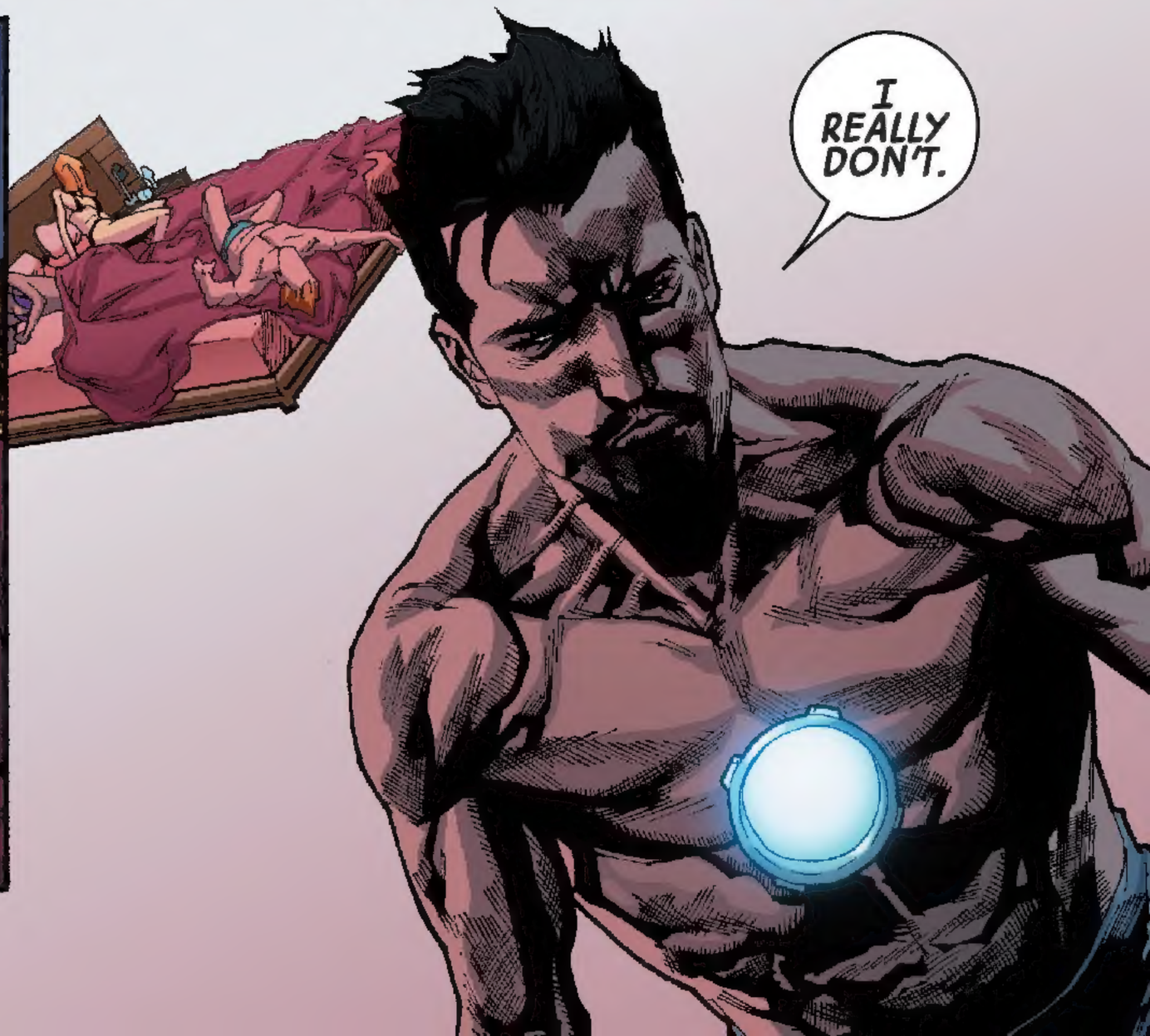

TONY...?

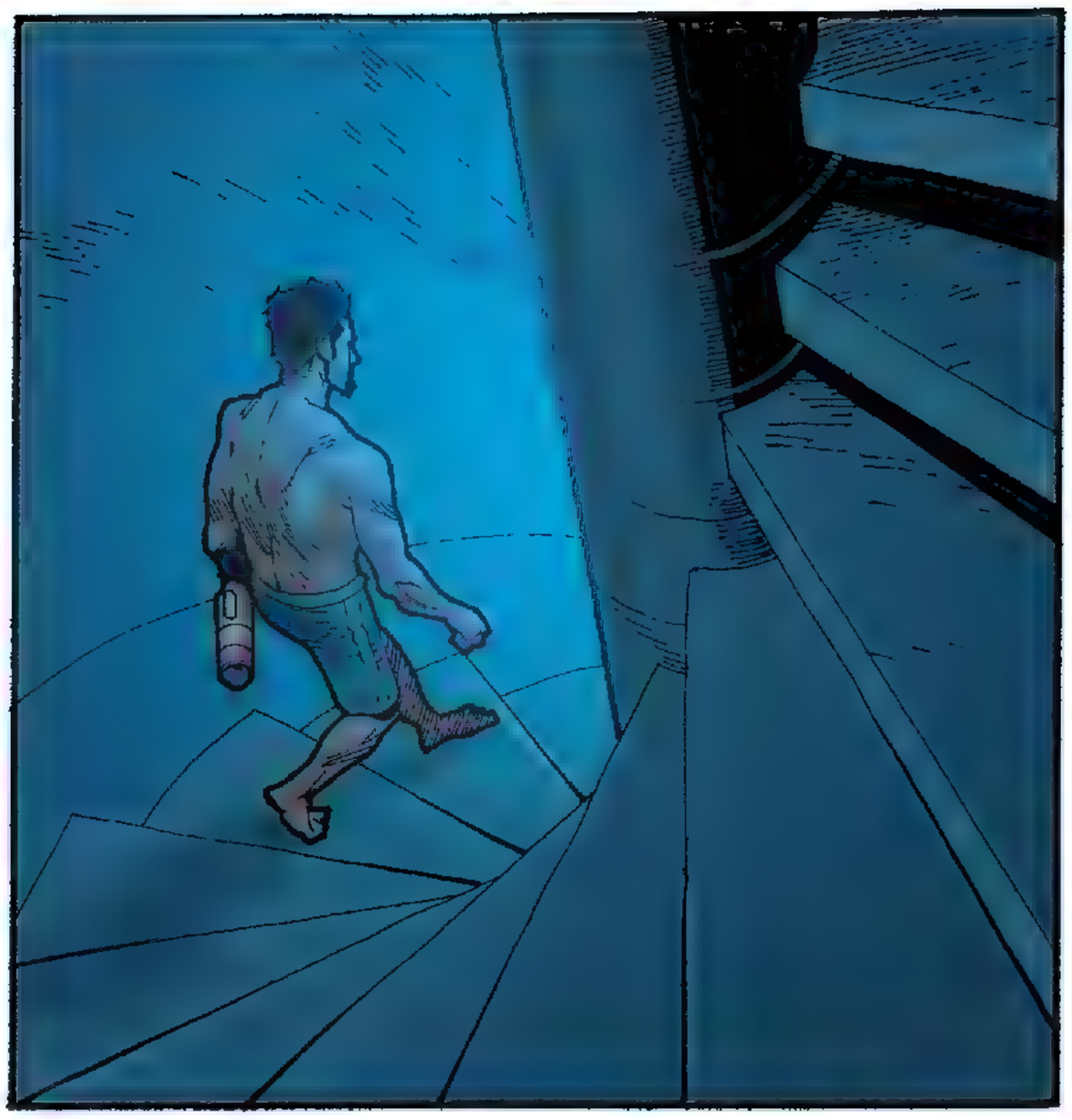
COME BACK TO BED.
I'D LIKE TO. REALLY. BUT I HAVE WORK TO DO.


NOW?
YES. YOU SEE, THE OTHER ME IS GOING TO BE WORKING ALREADY. HE CAN'T RELEASE TENSION ANY OTHER FUN WAY, THE POOR, MECHANICAL BASTARD.

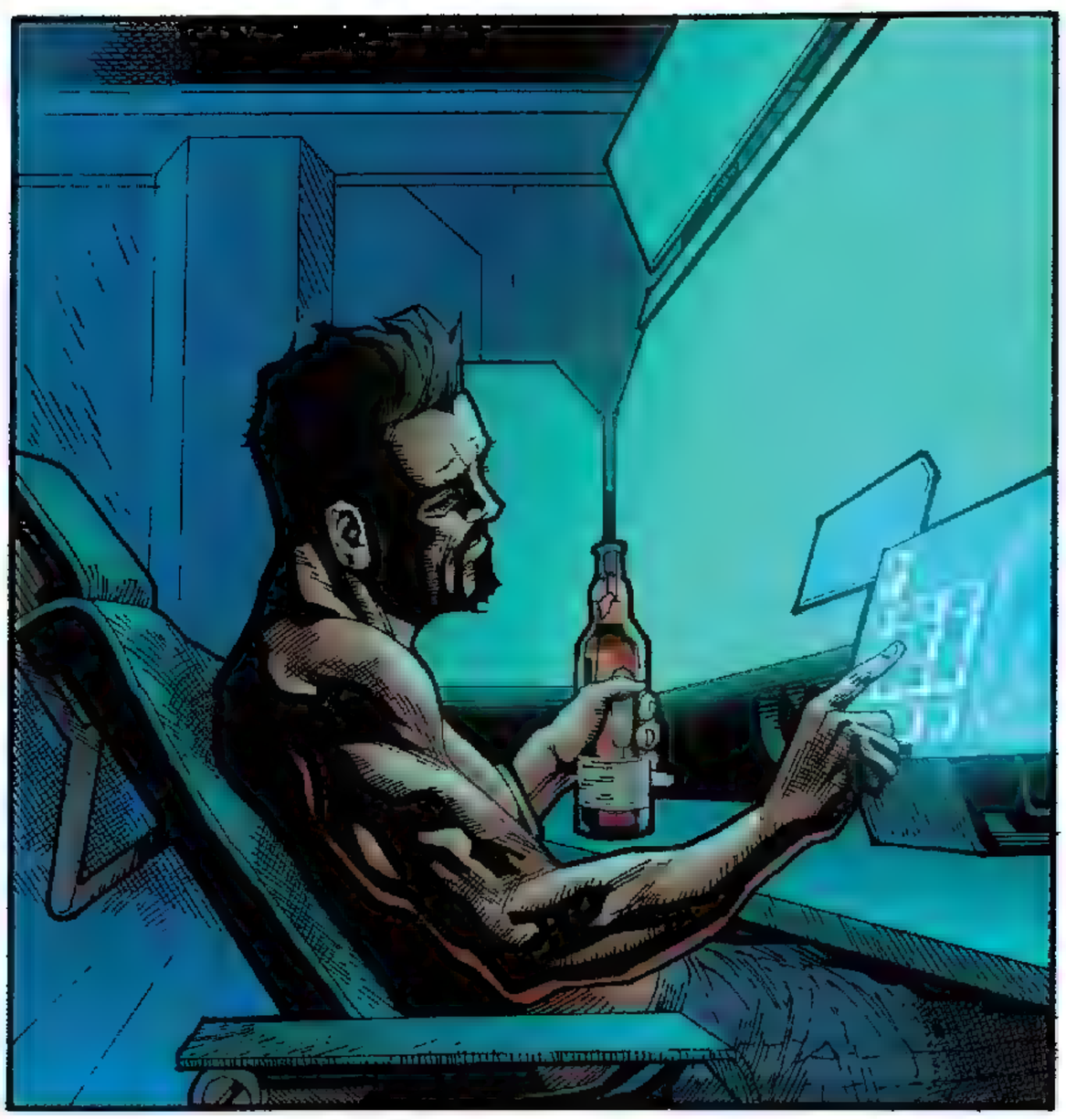
THERE'S ANOTHER YOU?
YEAH. A BACK-UP ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS TRYING TO WIPE MY ENTIRE CONSCIOUSNESS OUT OF EXISTENCE. AND... WELL, HE'S ME. SO, HE'S COMPETENT ENOUGH TO DO IT.

OH...
THAT SUCKS.
IT DOES SUCK. NICE INSIGHT, CANDY.
I KNOW WHEN THINGS SUCK. I HAVE A PHD IN PSYCHOLOGY.
ACTUALLY, DO YOU... WANT TO TALK?


I REALLY DON'T.



ZZZEEE



AH. THERE WE GO.

NOW IT'S A PARTY.
DEET

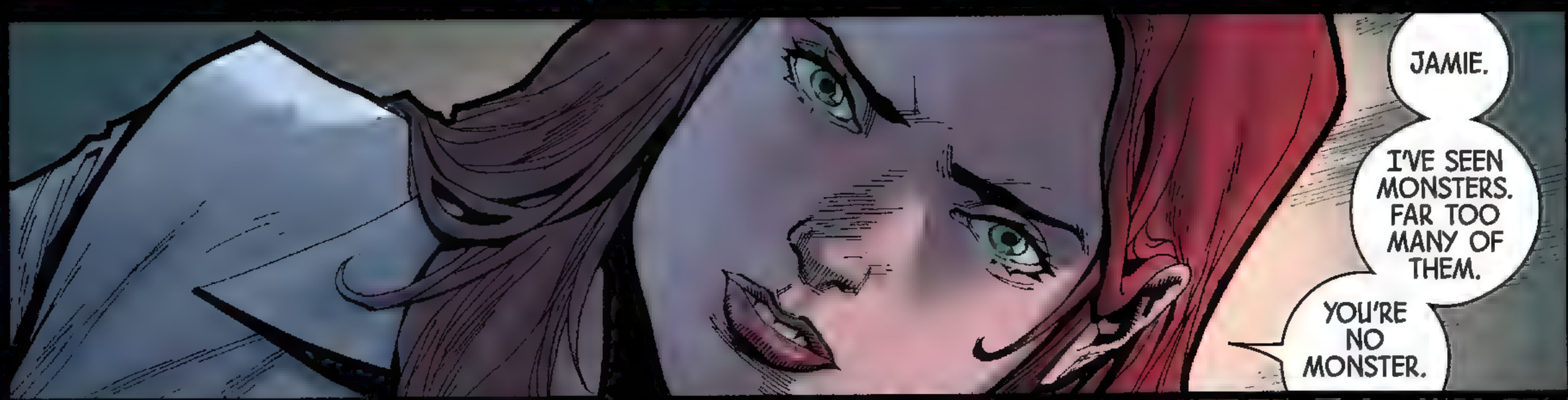
CRKKKAK

JAMIE!

MS. POTTS?
I...UM... I BROKE THE BED.

THAT'S OKAY. I SHOULDN'T HAVE A BED HERE ANYWAY. IT JUST ENCOURAGES ME TO SLEEP AT THE OFFICE AND NEVER LEAVE.
I'M SORRY.
DON'T BE. REALLY. MY SOCIAL LIFE THANKS YOU FOR PROVIDING THIS VALUABLE SERVICE.

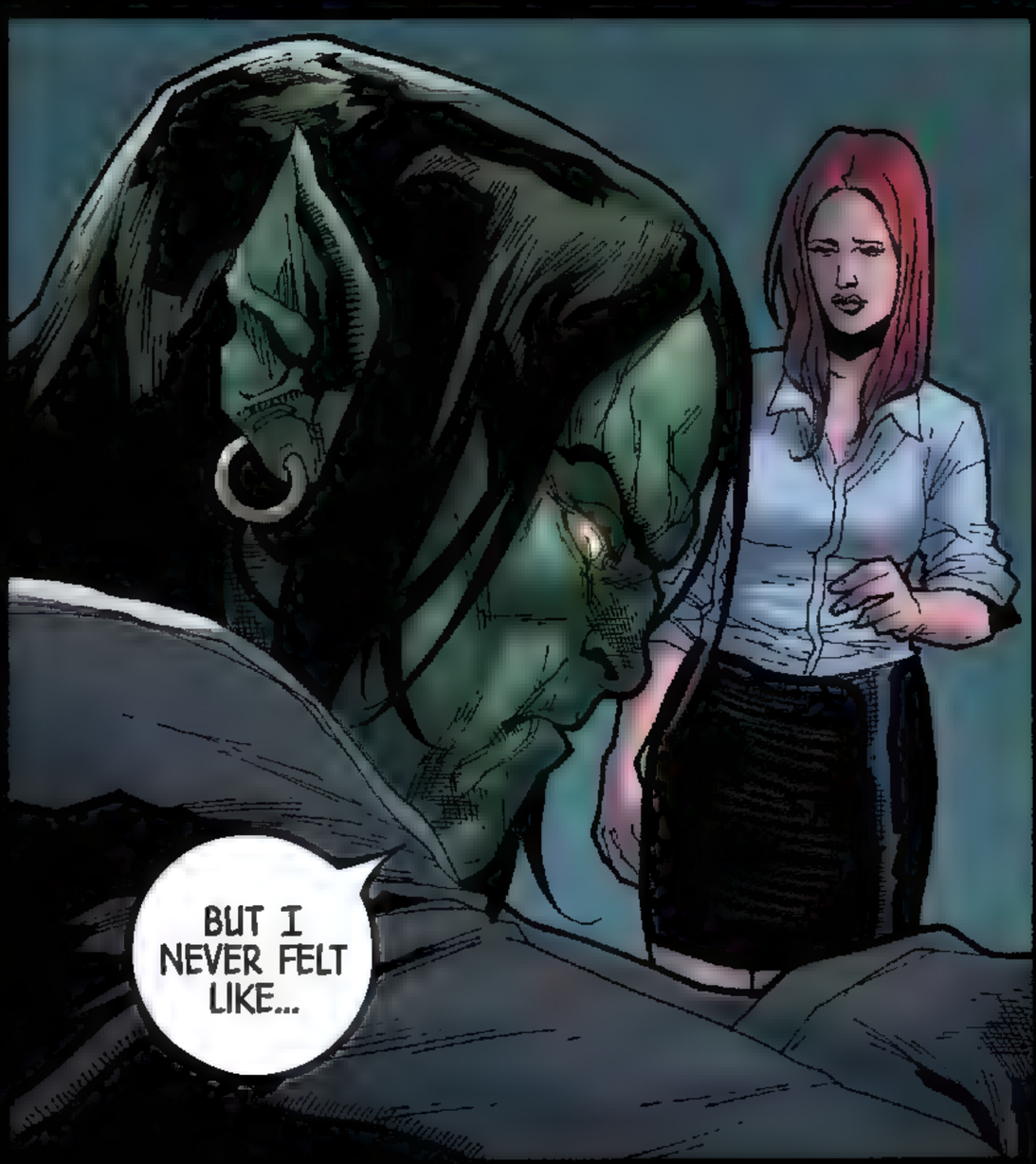
BAD DREAMS?
KINDA. NOT AS BAD AS WAKING UP AND LITERALLY BEING A MONSTER.


JAMIE.
I'VE SEEN MONSTERS. FAR TOO MANY OF THEM.
YOU'RE NO MONSTER.

SHE'S RIGHT.

WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE ISN'T WHO YOU ARE.
IT MIGHT SOUND A BIT CLICHÉD BUT I THINK I CAN SAY THIS WITH SOME AUTHORITY, BEING A BACK-UP MIND WALKING AROUND IN A MACHINE BODY.

MY MOM USED TO SAY THAT, TOO--
--NOT THE BIT ABOUT WALKING AROUND IN A MACHINE BODY.
YEAH. THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN A HELL OF A COINCIDENCE.


BUT I NEVER FELT LIKE...

I DIDN'T REALLY KNOW IF I WAS IN THE RIGHT BODY BEFORE.
AND NOW I'M STUCK IN THIS ONE.

JAMIE. WHEN THIS IS DONE, I'M GOING TO FIND A WAY TO HELP YOU. I PROMISE.
WE'LL FIND A WAY TO--
BZZZT
TONY?
PEPPER! IT'S NICE TO HEAR YOUR VOICE. I WAS EXPECTING TO HEAR THE GUTTURAL GRUNT OF A PERMANENTLY PISSED THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD MONSTER.
WHAT DO YOU WANT, TONY?
NO DOUBT ARTIFICIAL TONY'S COMING UP WITH NEW AND CREATIVE WAYS OF DESTROYING ME AND INHABITING MY BRAIN. BUT COULD YOU PASS ON A MESSAGE FOR ME?
WHAT?
TELL HIM--

"--BIO-MARK-ONE."

IF HE'S DONE WHAT I THINK HE HAS, I HAVE TO ACT.

WHY? WHAT'S BIO-MARK-ONE?

BIO-SUITS.

THE IDEA WAS, YOU COULD LAND IN ANY WAR ZONE, AND, IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT RESOURCES... YOU HARNESS PEOPLE.

WHAT?

IT'S JUST MANIPULATING DIFFERENT ELECTRICAL IMPULSES. YOU TAKE OVER THE MINDS AND BODIES OF CIVILIANS OR SOLDIERS. AND USE THEM LIKE DRONES.

IT COULD HAVE BEEN USED FOR PEACE. WARS COULD HAVE BEEN WON WITHOUT A SINGLE SHOT FIRED.

I CAN SEE SOME PRETTY BIG BASIC-HUMAN-RIGHTS-SIZED HOLES IN THIS IDEA.

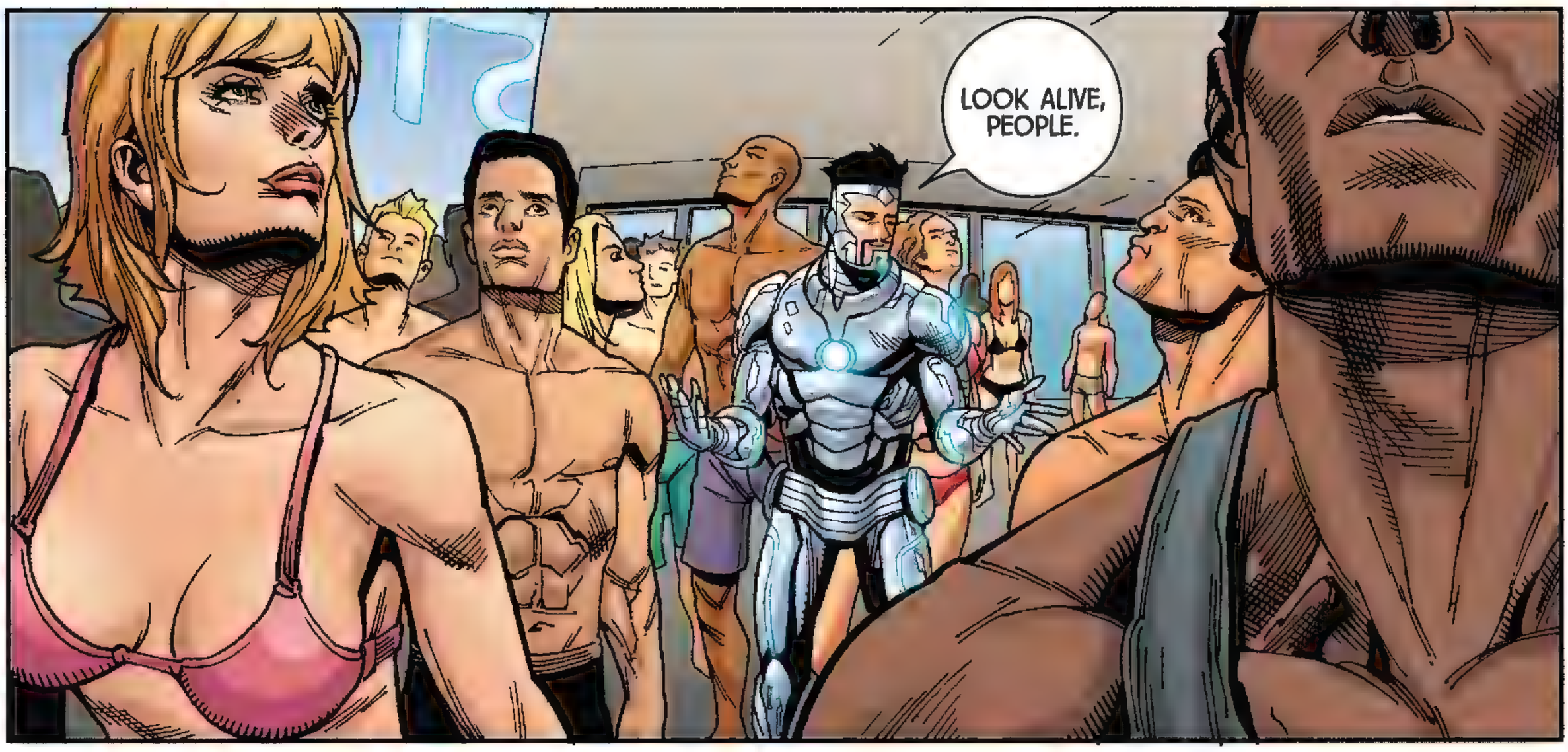
THERE'S A REASON I DIDN'T MAKE IT, PEPPER. IT'S IMMORAL.

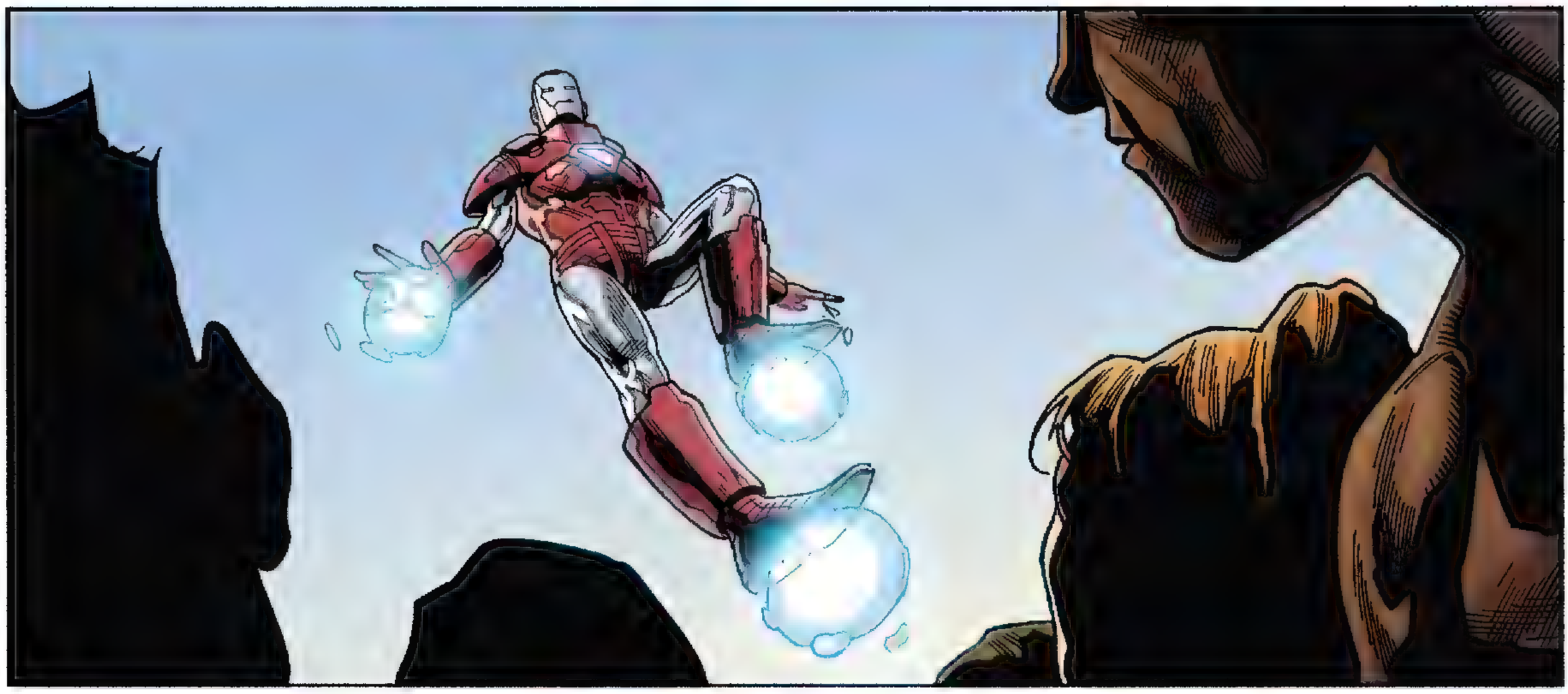
YOU THINK?

BUT THERE'S NO MORALITY LEFT IN HIM ANYMORE. HE'D DO THIS JUST TO SEE IF HE COULD.

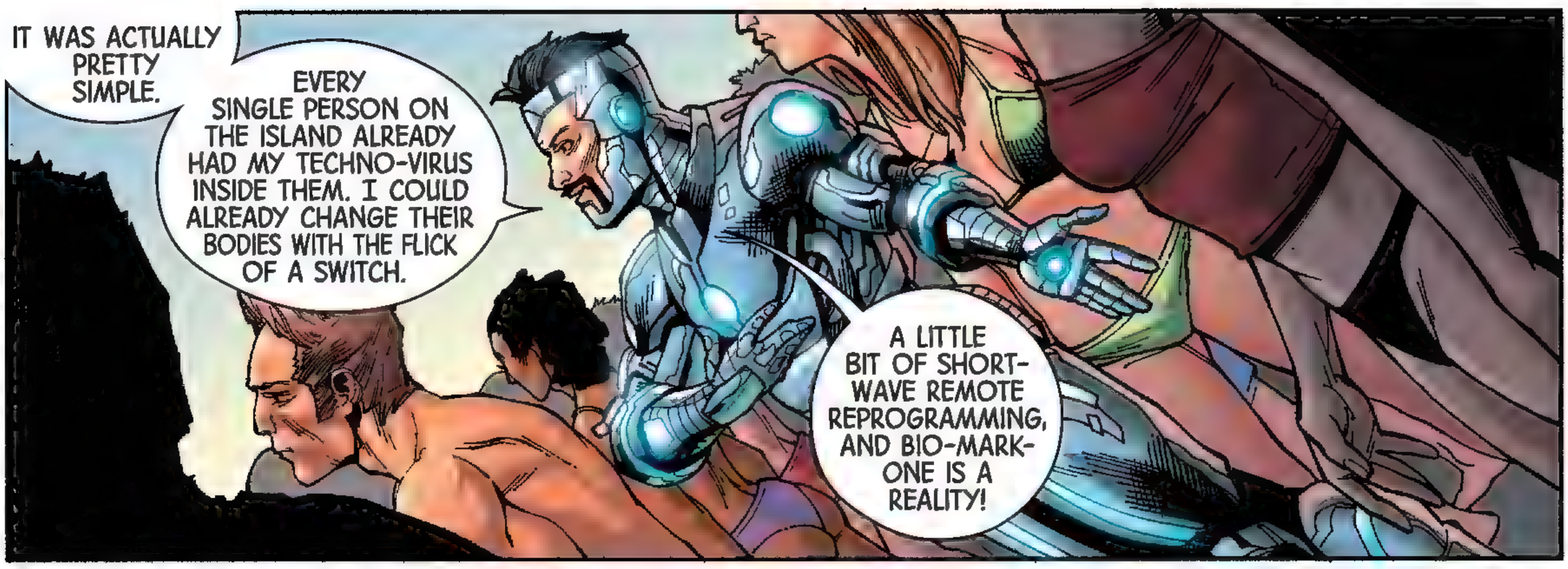
IDENTIFIED: TONY STARK.

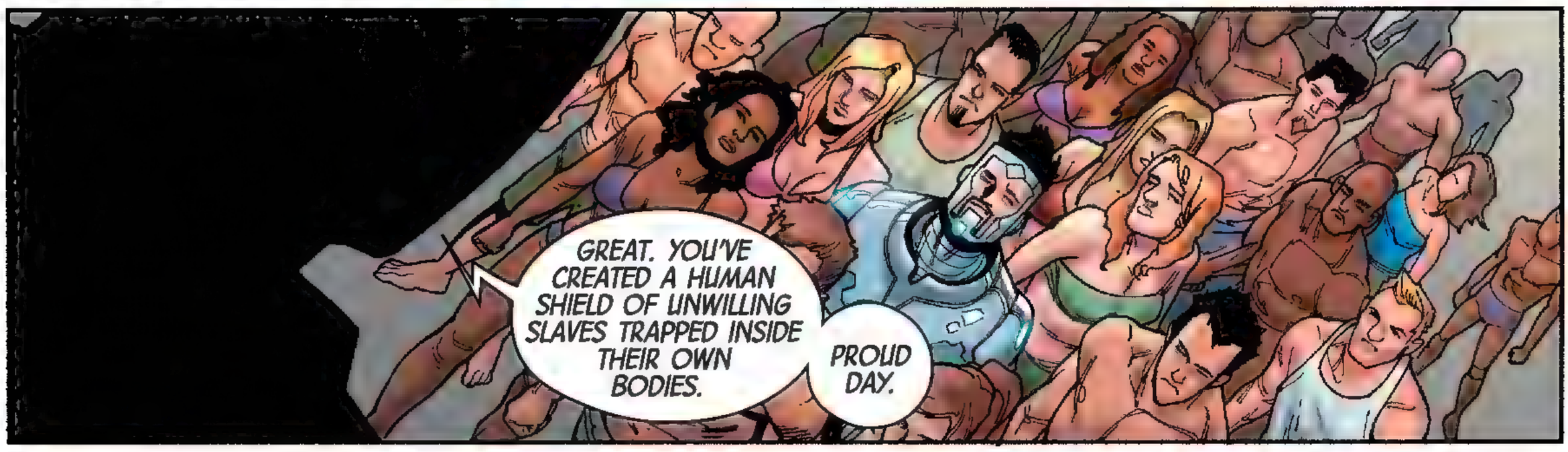
OKAY. THE IRON SIGHTS ARE TRACKING HIM. HE'LL BE HERE ANY MINUTE. PLACES, EVERYONE.


LOOK ALIVE, PEOPLE.



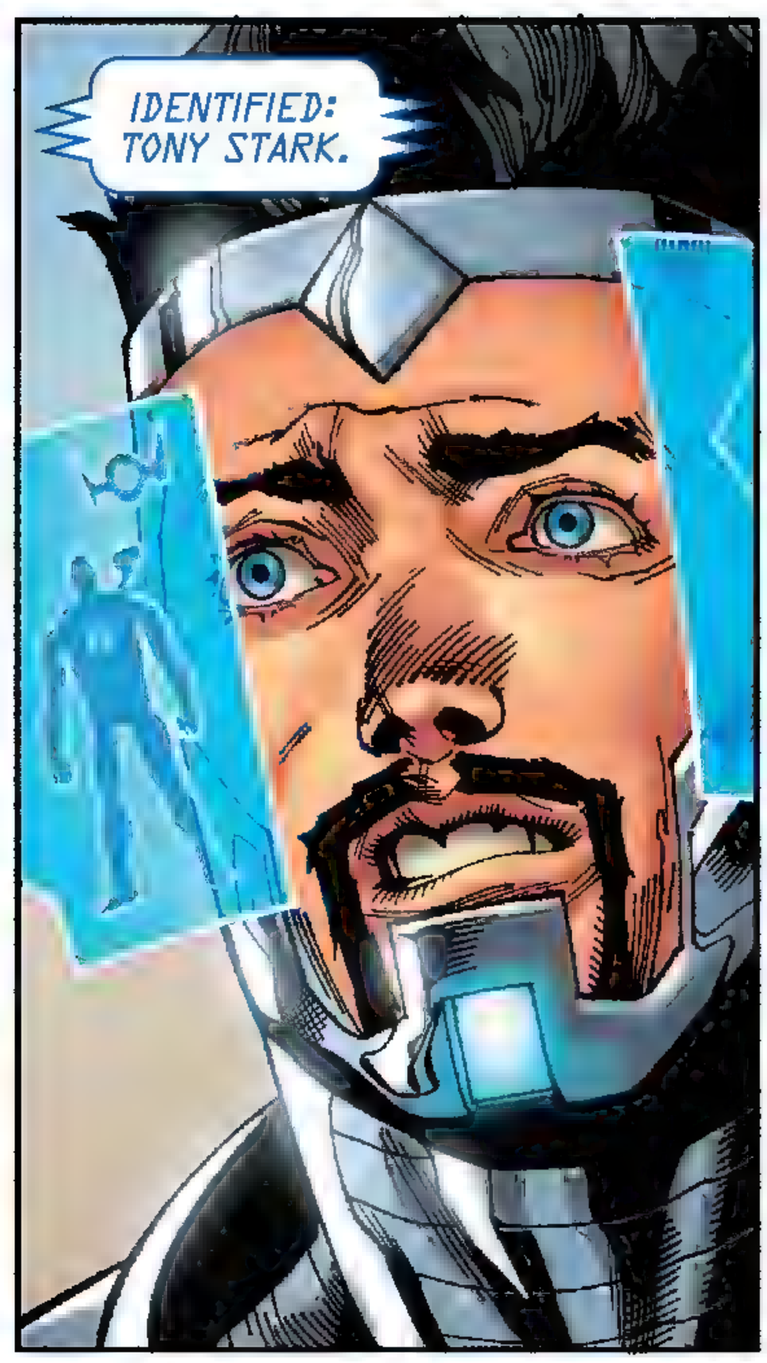
IT WORKED.


IT WAS ACTUALLY PRETTY SIMPLE.
EVERY SINGLE PERSON ON THE ISLAND ALREADY HAD MY TECHNO-VIRUS INSIDE THEM. I COULD ALREADY CHANGE THEIR BODIES WITH THE FLICK OF A SWITCH.
A LITTLE BIT OF SHORT-WAVE REMOTE REPROGRAMMING, AND BIO-MARK-ONE IS A REALITY!


GREAT. YOU'VE CREATED A HUMAN SHIELD OF UNWILLING SLAVES TRAPPED INSIDE THEIR OWN BODIES.
PROUD DAY.

LET THEM GO.
AND THEN WHAT? YOU'LL STOP TRYING TO STEAL MY BODY?
NO. I HAVE A COMPLETELY DISPOSABLE ARMY TO PROTECT ME. I THINK I'LL KEEP THEM.

IDENTIFIED: TONY STARK.
HUH?


IDENTIFIED: TONY STARK.

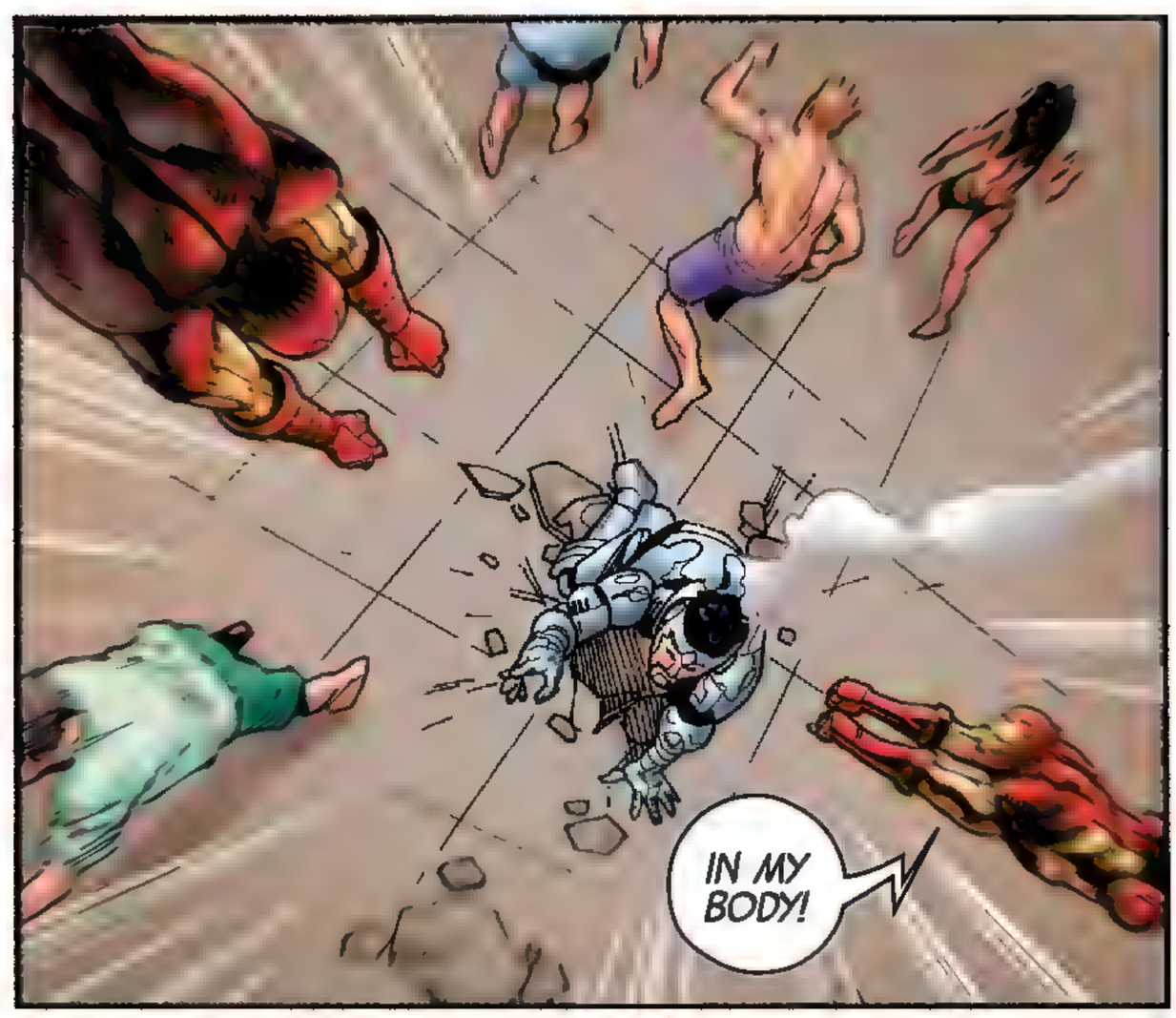
IDENTIFIED: TONY STARK.
WHAT THE--?

"AH...I SEE--"
IDENTIFIED: TONY STARK.
IDENTIFIED: TONY STARK.
"--YOU HAVE YOUR OWN ARMY."
IDENTIFIED: TONY STARK.
IDENTIFIED: TONY STARK.

THESE ARE PEOPLE, TONY.
THEY ARE NOT YOUR PLAYTHINGS.
THEY ARE NOT YOUR EXPERIMENTS.

THE DAMAGE YOU'VE DONE.
CRUNCH!!!

WITH MY FACE.


IN MY BODY!

IN MY NAME!
IN MY NAME!

CNK
OH, SHUT UP.
OKAY. IF YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE AWAY ALL OF MY NEW TOYS--
--AND USE MY OWN ARMORS AGAINST ME, THEN I GUESS I HAVE TO USE MY OWN UNFAIR ADVANTAGE.
I'M HAPPY, REALLY. I GET TO SHOW YOU WHAT WE CAN DO...
...WHEN ALL OF THOSE MORAL CODES AND INHIBITIONS ARE GONE.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S LEFT WHEN YOU TAKE AWAY EVERYTHING THAT WAS HOLDING US BACK?

FREEDOM.
TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT ISSUE:

ZONE